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Reporter of Decisions

The Reporter of Decisions is a constitutional officer of the Arkansas Supreme Court. Article 7, section 7, of the Arkansas Constitution of 1874 provides, in part: "The Supreme Court shall appoint its clerk and reporter, who shall hold their offices for six years subject to removal for good cause." The Supreme Court Reporter also serves as Reporter of the Arkansas Court of Appeals. Ark. Code Ann. § 16-12-108(b) (Repl. 1994).

It is the statutory duty of the Reporter of Decisions to

- Prepare the syllabus without delay after the Clerk of the Supreme Court furnishes him or her with a copy of the decisions of the court;
- Prefix notes to each published decision containing the points decided therein;
- Edit the decisions of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals and make technical corrections thereto;
- Oversee publication and distribution of the decisions of the Supreme Court and court of Appeals in such format and medium as the Supreme Court may direct; and
- Perform other duties as the Supreme Court assigns.

Ark. Code Ann. § 16-11-202 (Supp. 2009). In 2009, the Supreme Court directed that publication of the Arkansas Reports and Arkansas Appellate Reports "where appellate decisions of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals have been officially reported since 1837 and 1981, respectively" would be discontinued and that the electronic versions of appellate decisions posted on the Arkansas Judiciary website would be the official report of those decisions. All appellate decisions handed down after February 14, 2009, are officially reported and distributed in electronic form via the Arkansas Judiciary website. Examples of the new citation formats can be found in the House Style Guide, published by this office.

In practical terms, the Reporter of Decisions serves as the legal editor and publisher for the appellate courts, working closely with the justices and judges of the Arkansas Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, the Clerk of the Supreme Court, and the various vendors that receive and republish electronically transmitted material. Neither the Courts' opinions nor the Reporter's headnotes are copyrighted.

Each Wednesday and Thursday during regular court sessions, the Reporter's office receives electronic and hard copies of the published Court of Appeals and Supreme Court decisions and processes them for dissemination. The Reporter and Deputy Reporter then proofread the opinions, note suggested changes, and write headnotes, which are submitted to the justices and judges for approval. The Reporter's office edits conservatively, allowing for stylistic

differences among the opinion writers. Still, an effort is made to achieve something approaching a house style in usage and citation format. Among the principal guides relied upon by the Reporter's office are current editions of The Chicago Manual of Style; The Bluebook; William Strunk, Jr., and E.B. White's Elements of Style; Bryan A. Garner's A Dictionary of Modern Legal Usage and Black's Law Dictionary; C. Edward Good's Citing and Typing the Law: A Guide to Legal Citations; and our own internal House Style Guide.

For opinions published prior to February 14, 2009, volumes of the official Arkansas Reports and Arkansas Appellate Reports are available through the Administrative Office of the Courts, Justice Building, 625 Marshall Street, Little Rock, AR 72201. Opinions published after that time are officially reported and available on the Arkansas Judiciary website. Memoranda of corrections should be sent to Susan P. Williams, Reporter of Decisions, Justice Building, 625 Marshall Street, Little Rock, AR 72201.

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